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Press release: William Street trees

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.WILLIAM STREET TREES.

19.1.73

The Premier, Mr. Dunstan, today acted to save the twenty nine trees lining William Street in Norwood.

The Highways Commissioner has given notice to the ^{Kensington &} Norwood Council that he proposes to recommend to His Excellency the Governor that William Street be declared a main road to prevent the trees being cut down.

This action was taken after Mr. Dunstan conferred this morning with Mr. Virgo, Minister of Roads and Transport and Local Government, and Mr. Johinke, the Commissioner of Highways. He also had discussions with the Mayor of Kensington and Norwood, Mr. Richards.

Mr. Virgo then sent the following letter to the Town Clerk of the Kensington and Norwood Council.

"I write to express grave concern at the decision made by your Council as reported in the press, to proceed with the removal of trees in William Street, Norwood.

"Following this press report I conferred with the Hon. the Premier, and as a result I have asked the Commissioner of Highways to prepare a recommendation to His Excellency the Governor that William Street, Norwood, be declared a Main Road in accordance with Section 30 of the Highways Act 1926/72.

"The Commissioner of Highways, I understand, is informing you direct of his intention to make this recommendation.

"With the declaration of William Street as a Main Road you would appreciate that the trees may not be removed without my prior approval having been given, and it goes without saying that that approval will not be forthcoming.

"The action of declaring William Street a Main Road is only being taken in an endeavour to save these trees and accordingly when the Government is satisfied that the Council would not remove the trees action would be taken to revoke the proclamation.

"Section 30 of the Highways Act provides that the Governor may not proclaim any road a Main Road until at least one month after the Council has been informed of the intention and accordingly I seek from you an immediate assurance that no action will be taken by Council to give effect to the decision to remove the trees pending the expiration of that one month period."

Mr. Johinke also wrote to the Town Clerk notifying him of the intended proclamation.

His letter added:

"In view of the intent of this notice no action should be taken to interfere with the trees in any way in the one month period required before the proclamation can be made".

Mr. Dunstan said he had taken this unusual action to halt destruction of the trees as the Council was apparently prepared to cut them down despite vigorous opposition from residents, the Mayor and himself.

"I have on numbers of other occasions directly intervened with Government departments to ensure no tree is destroyed unless it is absolutely inevitable.

"I was distressed to hear that the William Street trees were to be destroyed and anxious, as Member for Norwood, to do anything I could to save them.

"Accordingly I decided on this unusual course of action as the most effective way to do so in the very short time available.